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FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6585
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA IMMEDIATE 6911
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0522
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000225

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/14/2031
TAGS: [ECPS](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [EIND](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: TELECOM AND HOSTAGE CRISIS

REF: LAGOS 137 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (D/E)

Vmobile Assisted SSS During Hostage Crisis

1. (S/NF) Vmobile Chief Regulatory Officer told us the Bayelsa State Director State Security Services (SSS) approached the company during the hostage crisis to request data on kidnappers who were apparently using Vmobile networks to communicate. In a series of four to five meetings with the SSS, Vmobile disclosed private information including telephone numbers and real-time locations of kidnappers.

Vmobile Provided Data for Two Numbers

2. (S/NF) Vmobile Chief Regulatory Officer J.P. Snijders told us the Bayelsa State Director SSS Kola Adesina approached Vmobile January 16 requesting assistance and data from Vmobile to identify kidnappers who were apparently using Vmobile networks for their telephone communications. Snijders had a series of conversations with Adesina, and provided the SSS with caller/called voice and SMS numbers (MSISDNs), handset numbers (IMSIs), and cell phone location. Vmobile tracked activity and identified voice and SMS for two numbers, one used from January 16-19, and another from January 19-24. No activity was recorded on those numbers thereafter, Snijders said. (Note: Voice decryption is not enabled on any Nigerian GSM mobile network. End Note).

Kidnappers Use Temporary SIM Cards

3. (S/NF) According to Snijders, Adesina was involved in GON efforts to negotiate the hostage release. Adesina admitted to Snijders that GON on the ground surveillance and detection capacity was poor, and requested Vmobile track call locations of two separate groups to trace their movements. According to Snijders, the kidnappers used temporary subscriber

identification module (SIM) cards, for a limited period of time, to cover their tracks.

Telecom Firms Face Similar Concerns to Oil Companies

¶4. (S/NF) Although not of the scale of the oil sector, security is a serious concern for Vmobile as they have had contractors harassed or taken hostage in the Delta region. Snidjers said Vmobile and other companies would frequently need to build infrastructure such as base stations in the night to avoid being targeted by angry, unemployed youth in the region.

Vmobile Reports Kidnappings Politically Motivated

¶5. (S/NF) Snijders' account harmonized with earlier reports (reftels) that suggested this kidnapping was politically motivated. Adesina told Snijders the Ijaw militants behind the kidnapping were making a political statement to the Federal Government and oil companies to address declining living standards and economic challenges faced by local communities in the Delta region.

Comment

¶6. (S/NF) In the event of another protracted crisis, cellular telephones will likely play a key role. Consequently,

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telecom companies can also play a role as a source of information. Vmobile has intimated that they might be willing to share sensitive user information if sharing that information to sources outside of Vmobile and even beyond the GON might help resolve a future crisis. End Comment.
BROWNE